

**Minutes of the Meeting of THRIVING COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
held at the ZOOM on Thursday, 20 January 2022**

PRESENT; Councillor Marc Davies (Chairman), Councillors Euros Davies (Vice-Chair), Clive Davies, Gareth Davies, Gethin Davies, Ifan Davies, Meirion Davies, Rhodri Davies, Elizabeth Evans, Keith Evans, Gwyn James, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason and John Roberts

Also in attendance: Councillors Rhodri Evans, Ray Quant, Dafydd Edwards (until 10:45am), Alun Williams, Gareth Lloyd, Ellen ap Gwynn (Leader of the Council) and Catherine Hughes. (Cabinet Members).

Councillor Ceredig Davies was also present as an Attendee (non-Committee Member).

Steve Wilson, Managing Director of Wastewater, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Owain George Daniel, Planning Liaison Manager, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water.

Officers in attendance: Rhodri Llwyd, Corporate Lead Officer, Highways and Environmental, Sarah Groves-Phillips, Planning Policy Service Manager, Phil Jones, Corporate Manager, Highways Services, Owen Stephens, Senior Engineer, Norman Birch, Ash-die back Officer, Gerwyn Jones, Corporate Manager Environmental Services, , Beverley Hodgett, Service Manager, Nicola Parry, Parking Services Manager, Lyndon Griffiths, Corporate Manager, Russell Hughes Pickering, Corporate Lead Officer, Economy & Regeneration, Lisa Evans, Standards and Scrutiny Officer, Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Iona Davies and Carol Thomas (Translators).

(10:00am – 2:05pm)

26 Apologies

Councillor John Adams-Lewis apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

Representatives from Natural Resources Wales apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

Councillor Dafydd Edwards, Cabinet Member, apologised that he would be leaving the meeting at 10:45am due to another commitment, however, Cllr Edwards had made prior arrangements for the relevant Officers to present the reports in his absence.

**27 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)
Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act**

2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Councillor Euros Davies disclosed a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in regard to agenda item 3, Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water.

Planning and Phosphates - Councillor Clive Davies disclosed a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in regard to agenda item number 6, Pay and Display Car Parks. Both left the meeting during discussions.

28 Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water planning and phosphates discussion

Representatives from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) attended the meeting as requested at a previous Thriving Communities meeting. The request from Committee Members was to discuss the phosphate situation in Ceredigion, as well as issues around Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) discharging effluent into the other riverine areas of Ceredigion (namely Aberaeron harbour) and response times for consultations by the Development Management Service. DCWW Officers relevant to those topic areas in question agreed to attend this morning's meeting.

The Chair welcomed and thanked Steve Wilson and Owain George Daniel for attending the meeting and for their readiness to speak with Committee Members regarding this issue of concern. The Chairman expressed his disappointment that Representatives from NRW were not in attendance only having advised Council Officers yesterday evening that they could no longer attend.

Sarah Groves-Phillips introduced the background and current situation to the issues raised.

In January 2021 Natural Resources Wales released interim planning advice regarding development with the catchments of riverine Special Areas of Conservation SACs in Wales. This advice was to ensure compliance monitoring of the River Teifi which was suffering from episodic failure of its Phosphate level monitoring, no further development would be allowed which could increase or potentially increase phosphate levels in the riverine SAC.

Steve Wilson then gave a power point presentation outlining Dwr Cymru Welsh Water's plans. He also explained the process of mitigating the phosphates issue. Owain George Daniel assured Committee Members that there is ongoing background work being undertaken. He advised the Committee that relevant Stakeholders are fully engaged in this process.

The guidance issued has had significant knock-on impact across the County; namely:

1. Lampeter, Tregaron, Llandysul and surrounding settlements are affected;

2. The Local Development Plan has been put on hold;
3. Allocated sites within the affected areas are unable to be delivered (over 500 homes of which 114 were to be affordable);
4. Planning applications have had to be held in abeyance or refused;
5. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has confirmed only one WWTP has phosphate stripping in place in Ceredigion located in Llanddewi Brefi, and there are unconfirmed plans that 1 other in Tregaron may be included in the 2025-2030 AMP period; and;
6. Preliminary source apportionment work (for DCWW on the River Wye) demonstrates a significant proportion of phosphates comes from agriculture as well as WWTP's.

Committee Members then had the opportunity to question DCWW and CCC Officers and the main points/concerns raised were:

- It was confirmed that following collection of samples from the Rivers, an Independent Source scrutinises the level of phosphates present;
- Concern was raised regarding Tregaron, Lampeter and Llandysul Towns as there are no plans for the next five years, which will result in no new approved developments. Steve Wilson responded advising that the AMP8 plan can still be amended;
- There is a firm commitment from DCWW to investigate appropriate solutions;
- NRW need to be persuaded to consider catchments rather than locations;
- Concern was raised in regard to discharge of raw sewage into the river Aeron, Aberaeron. Steve Wilson confirmed this is an issue he is aware of and will discuss with Councillor Elizabeth Evans, Local Member, following the meeting;
- A Member asked whether chemical filtration should be abandoned? Steve Wilson replied that there is a drive for a nature based low carbon, low chemical approach to treatment, but, unfortunately the only technique which offers a degree of certainty at present is chemical;
- In response to a question regarding bathing water, Steve Wilson confirmed that DCWW are 100% committed to ensure clean waters on all beaches;
- Fishing trade in the River Teifi is an issue of concern at present;
- A Member stated that there are un-adopted sewage works in old estates bought during the 1986 reform and many still have to pay high maintenance repairs of up to £900.00 per annum. DCWW confirmed that due to the phosphate issues they cannot be adopted at present;
- In response to a question Owain George Daniel stated that there is a willingness to enable development types that would not impact phosphates to ensure local trade can continue;
- The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn and Councillor Rhodri Evans stated that the Cabinet has sent a letter to Mark Drakeford, First Minister, Julie James, Minister for Climate Change, Leslie Griffiths, Minister for Rural Affairs, and Vaughan Gething, Minister for Economy, regarding the Authorities Economic and Development concerns due to Phosphates, and no reply has been received to date;
- The Leader also confirmed that she has together with the Chief Executive, Eifion Evans, met with Natural Resources Wales. Councillor Ap Gwynn expressed her disappointment that no NRW representative was in attendance at this meeting;

- In response to a comment regarding the River Teifi not being far from compliant, DCWW stated that there is work in progress that provides some hope of a solution in the not too distant future and the importance of working collaboratively is a key requirement for the suggested successful outcome;
- A Nutrient Management Board comprising all relevant Stakeholders has been set up and are due to meet in the near future; and;
- It was suggested that DCWW approach IBERS as they are currently undertaking research at present to see if they can help with possible solutions.

The Chairman, on behalf of Committee Members, thanked the Officers from Welsh Water Dwr Cymru for attending and for their valued contribution at the meeting. The Chairman also thanked Sarah Groves-Phillips.

It was suggested and agreed by Committee Members that the Chairman writes to Natural Resources Wales, expressing their disappointment that a representative did not attend the meeting as was previously agreed.

29 Ash Dieback - Update for Information

Phil Jones introduced the report providing background information regarding the situation relating to Ash-die back. Ash Die-back (ADB) will lead to the decline and death of up to 95% of Ash trees in the UK, with the Ash being widespread across Ceredigion and across Wales. This includes outside of woodlands in the form of hedgerow and specimen trees along roads, other public rights of way (PROW's) and in public spaces. Ash is one of our three main hedgerow trees, alongside oak and beech.

The risk is that dead and diseased trees are likely to pose a health and safety danger to the public, together with the significant economic, environmental and landscape impact. The situation is of such a concern that Ash-die back is on the Authority's Risk Register.

Phil Jones advised the Committee of the work completed to date as outlined in the report. He then advised Members of the planned work for the coming months, as listed below:

1. Develop and maintain a continuity of response across all services likely to be in contact with the public in relation to Ash Dieback to include:

- Coast and Countryside – Tree Officer
- Public Rights of Way
- Public Protection
- Planning/Building control
- Parks & Gardens

2. Deliver the communications plan, to provide information and guidance to:

- Farmers
- Foresters
- Woodland owners
- Other landowners
- Tree professionals (especially those not in professional associations)
- Government and agency staff

- Colleges
 - General public
 - Media
3. Analysis of survey data:
- April 2022 – March 2023, Prioritise works program of trees owned by Ceredigion, as per agreed tree risk matrix
 - Prioritise issuing of section 154 notices (Highway & PROW) and section 23 of the Miscellaneous provisions act notices (Council owned & public access land) to private landowners as, per agreed tree risk matrix
 - Send guidance/advice letters to private owners of lower risk trees, as per agreed tree risk matrix.
4. Manage reactive actions to ADB - Initial advice letter & section 154 notices to Landowners (issues raised other than from surveys)
- Issues raised by members of the public
 - Ceredigion staff
 - Other stakeholders
5. Produce and tender surveying works for 2022 - 2023
- Produce and tender surveying works as per Ash Dieback Action Plan for 22/23
 - Further investigation required to determine and review use of innovative solutions for surveying (Satellite imagery, drone surveying etc)

Norman Birch and Owen Stephens were also present to answer any questions.

A Committee Member asked if the possibility of purchasing machinery and using in-house Staff to undertake this work had been explored as requested during a previous meeting on the 15 January 2020, recommended to Cabinet on the 28 January 2020 as follows:

- *Explore the opportunity of establishing a team within the authority with the appropriate machinery to undertake the felling work due to potentially being more cost-effective instead of contracting out the work. The bi-product could be used for biomass therefore providing an additional saving to the authority.*

Officers confirmed that this option had not been considered to date. A Committee Member enquired whether the chip from the trees could be stored and used for the biomass. Norman Birch stated that using the ash bi-product as a fuel for the Authority's bio-mass would likely be unsuitable, however, it should be investigated and considered further as an option.

It was agreed that a recommendation be presented again to Cabinet as follows:

- *that a feasibility study is undertaken to explore options for this work to be undertaken internally, and the bi-products use for fuelling the Authority's biomass, and that this is then reported back to the Committee.*

Members were asked to note the update as information only. The Chairman thanked the Officers for the information.

At a previous meeting, Members requested specific information from Officers as follows:

1. A report outlining what efficiency benefits have accrued from the re-design of the routes and are they as predicted or exceeded what was envisaged in the redesign document.
2. Quantify the additional fuel costs attributed to the redesigning of the routes, net of any increase in day to day increase in fuel costs.
3. Quantify any additional wear and tear cost to the collection vehicles as a consequence of routes redesign.
4. Quantify any additional labour cost in terms of overtime etc. associated as a Direct consequent of route redesign.
5. Provide comparison data of missed weekly collection rates for the past 3 years.
6. Provide an update report of the direction the department will pursue in Renewing the collection fleet, bearing in mind their impact on the environment and the Council's aspiration to become a carbon free Council.
7. Provide a brief report on what stage we are currently at, regarding the Proposed Waste transfer station at Penrhos.
8. Provide comparative data for the last 2 years in reported fly tipping incidents.
9. Provide update re usage / tonnage deposited at our Civic Amenity Sites over the last year.
10. Provide an estimate of when the garden waste service is likely to be reinstated.

Gerwyn Jones presented the report explaining that questions 1 to 4 above relate to a new kerbside waste collection service and that due to COVID-19's new ways of working a review of this service had not been possible. Beverley Hodgett was also present to answer any questions.

Gerwyn Jones explained that the report does contain some data in Relation to the service's performance and constraints. An update was provided by means of a Power Point presentation to the Committee which included the Service's Objectives, Performance against Objectives, recent changes, Kerbside Collection Service and it's Performance, impact of Covid-19, Customer Care, Household Waste Sites, Missed bins and Fly Tipping, Strategy.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions which were answered in turn by Officers. Main points arising from discussion were:

- In response to a question, Officers confirmed that the public cannot take recycling bags to Household Waste Sites unless they have sorted its contents in readiness to place in the relevant skips;
- Members asked whether it is possible for the Council Website to be updated regularly throughout the day, rather than at the end of the working day; and;
- Members were complimentary of the purple bag service.

Members agreed to note the content of the report and requested another update in due course. The Chairman and Cabinet Member thanked the Staff for their hard work and commitment in continuing to provide this Service during the pandemic.

31 Pay and Display Car Parks

Members requested a report with further details to the proposals presented to the Committee on the 10 October 2019. Following that meeting, the Committee recommended to Cabinet:

- Further work is undertaken with regards to the proposals suggested in terms of the pay and display car parks; and;
- The required consultation processes in respect of the Pendre Car Park, Cardigan, proposal are pursued.

Gerwyn Jones advised Committee Members of the current situation via a Power point presentation stating that the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on the Service's ability to progress projects and work beyond maintaining the delivery of front-line services.

The Parking Services team have been heavily involved with the Council's Corporate response to the pandemic which has seen staff redeployed to roles in the Test, Trace and Protect Team, Public Protection and to also support activities such as the delivery of food boxes to vulnerable individuals.

As the situation with the pandemic has evolved so has the response and in the case of the Parking Services team resumption of its full suite of activities, which are mainly related to monitoring, advising and enforcement work associated with the Council's Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) scheme and managing the portfolio of pay and display car parks, has taken place.

A new Parking Services Manager, Nicola Parry, was appointed and has been in Post since July 2021. The role had been vacant for over 12 months prior to this date due to the pandemic and the Environmental Services restructure. In addition to the Parking Services Manager, the small Parking Services Team currently consists of 4 x Parking Services Officers and 1 x Parking Services Works Leader.

There is currently 1 x vacant Parking Services Officer post and a recruitment process is ongoing in respect of this.

The small Parking Services Team are deployed on a prioritised basis where the need is deemed most and where their presence is likely to have a positive impact on issues or concerns. There are some issues and locations, such as in the vicinity of schools at the start and the end of the school day, and situations, such as pavement parking, where the scope of the team to influence these is limited.

Officers then advised the Committee of the amount of tickets purchased and income from all Ceredigion Town Pay and Display Car Parks as shown in the Report. The years 2020/21 and 2021/22 will obviously have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic both in terms of usage and income

generated via the machines.

Officers then referred to the information in relation to season tickets for use within the Ceredigion Pay and Display Car Parks.

Progress has been made following the suggestion from the Committee in October 2019 with regard to the provision of more card only parking machines. The Council's Pay and Display Car Parks have been cashless since the 1 December 2020. The transition, taking into account the number of transactions made, has gone well with arrangements reviewed and improved on an on-going basis to reflect feedback received and experience. The report to Cabinet, presented on the 12 January 2021 can be viewed via the following link:

[http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/\(Dwyieithog\)%20-%20Cashless%20Car%20Parking%20Charges.pdf](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/(Dwyieithog)%20-%20Cashless%20Car%20Parking%20Charges.pdf)

It is proposed to rationalise the offering across the car parks and to charge a consistent price per space for these across the portfolio of car parks, as detailed on pages 49 and 50 of the report. If there was an appetite to consider rationalising the charging structure, further modelling work would be required to forecast the impact on income generation. Due to the level of income generated careful consideration would need to be given to the options considered.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions which were Answered in turn by Officers. Main points are:

- A Member stated that there is a suggestion in the report to commence charging at Llandysul and Tregaron car parks. This will be considered further during the Budget Preparation. The Member suggested that Committee Members consider how this would impact on both town centres in terms of economic activity. And confirmed that he did not consider that introducing car park charges would be cost effective for the Authority in both cases;
- A Committee Member referred to the cashless machines as not user friendly and suggested they re-visit this issue. The Officer confirmed that the need to insert registration number had already been removed following a Scrutiny suggestion; and;
- A Member stated that Wales Audit Office have recognised that the cost of car parking are key barriers to visiting Town Centres, therefore having an adverse effect on the economy.

Following discussion, Committee Members were asked to consider the Following recommendation:

- That the Committee supports further work to be undertaken on the concept of rationalising the charging structure at Ceredigion County Council's Pay and Display Car Parks.

Committee Members agreed to support further work to be undertaken on the

concept of rationalising the charging structure at Ceredigion County Council's Pay and Display Car Parks.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for the information.

32 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2022

Sarah Groves-Phillips presented the report relating to the assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, and the duty to make provision for sites where the assessment identifies need, became statutory requirements under Section 101 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

The purpose of a Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is to ensure Local Authorities better understand how many Gypsy and Traveller pitches are required in their area, and should form a robust evidence base for local planning policies which meet those needs.

The GTAA must be carried out at least every five years and in this context Welsh Government published 'Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments Guidance' (2015) to assist Local Authorities in producing a robust assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in their area.

Ceredigion County Council submitted a GTAA to Welsh Government in January 2020, and received feedback requesting further work be undertaken on the potential need for transit site in the county. However following this advice, the Covid 19 pandemic emerged and this made engagement very difficult. Thus, Welsh Government provided an extension to all LPAs to undertake their GTAA until February 2022, in order to allow sufficient engagement with the GT community to be undertaken. The GTAA has been prepared in consultation with the Gypsy Traveller Steering Group.

The Officer stated that this report presents the results of the 2022 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment undertaken by the Authority.

Currently there are no local authority Gypsy Traveller sites and only one authorised private site in the county. There is no permanent provision for Showmen. New Travellers are believed to be present in the County but the Council holds no records of their location. Since June 2016, ethnicity has been included in the housing register application process which identified four members of the Gypsy Traveller community, three of whom are not currently living in Ceredigion and one who lives in bricks and mortar accommodation.

There are two further members of the Gypsy Traveller community who have been housed in bricks and mortar accommodation for a number of years and prior to the ability to identify ethnicity through the housing register application process.

As expected, it has proved extremely difficult to locate the target population for this assessment. From the very small number of questionnaires returned and interviews/site visits carried out, and discussions with WG the assessment concludes that there is no need for a permanent residential

Gypsy Traveller site in the County, and following further engagement with the landowner and residents of the site in Plwmp no need for a transit site. However, further work with the landowner and residents is required to formally arrange for a 'tolerated site' approach allowed under the WG guidance and consideration of potential improvements.

Following approval of the GTAA 2022 by Welsh Government, another review will be required in 5 years time.

Following discussion, Committee Members agreed to recommend to Cabinet:

- that the GTAA 2022 is submitted to Welsh Government for Agreement.

33 To confirm the Minutes of the previous Meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the 1 November 2021 and the 8 November 2021 as a true record.

In relation to the 1 November 2021 minutes, the Chairman referred to minute number 3, Active Travel Network Mapping (ATNM) Review, paragraph 7, in relation to Rhiwgoch, Aberaeron, in that he had requested land dedication letters be posted to landowners. The Chairman asked the Scrutiny Officer to contact the Officer for an update.

There were no matters arising from the 8 November 2021 minutes.

34 To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

Members agreed to note the Forward Work Plan as presented.

The Chair has requested that Democratic Services convey the following message to the Cabinet.

Cabinet members should be present at Scrutiny meetings to present items with Officers and listen to the important discussions. They are aware of the dates of Scrutiny meetings in advance, the same as all Members. Cabinet Members are paid for their duties the same as Scrutiny Chairs and should be expected to attend Scrutiny meetings.

This was after a number of Committee Members expressed their disappointment that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services, Housing and Customer Contact was not present to listen to the discussions and answer questions. It should, however be noted that the relevant Cabinet Member had apologised at the beginning of the meeting and made arrangements for the relevant Officers to present in his absence.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Thriving Communities Overview and
Scrutiny Committee held on 18 February 2022**

Chairman: _____

Date: _____